

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 277395

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

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DRAFTED BY S/S-O:LMATTESON

APPROVED BY S/S-O:LMATTESON

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R 231734Z NOV 75 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DACCA

S E C R E T STATE 277395

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT NEW DELHI 15581 ACTION SECSTATE NOV 23.

QUOTE: S E C R E T NEW DELHI 15581

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: IN, PFOR, BG

SUBJECT: INDIAN QUERY ABOUT SECRETARY'S LETTER TO
CHAVAN ON BANGLADESH

REF: NEW DELHI 14347

1. JOINT SECRETARY FOR THE AMERICAS TEJA CALLED IN THE
DCM NOVEMBER 22 TO DISCUSS BANGLADESH. REFERRING TO THE
SECRETARY'S LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN HE SAID THAT THE
US WAS GOING TO INFORM THE BANGLEES OF THE IMPORTANCE OF
PROTECTION OF INDIAN NATIONALS AND OF THE HINDU MINORITY
AND ASKED IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY RESPONSE. THE DCM REPLIED
THAT THE BANGALEES APPRECIATED THE NEED FOR SUCH PROTECTION AND
HAD TOLD US THEY HAD TAKEN STEPS TO PROVIDE IT. TEJA ASKED
WHETHER COMMUNICATION HAD BEEN ORAL OR IN WRITING. THE DCM
CONFIRMED IT HAD BEEN THE FORMER. TEJA ASKED WHETHER THE POSITION
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PAGE 02 STATE 277395

IN THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF THE SECRETARY'S LETTER REGARDING

BANGLADESH'S AVOIDING ANY BALANCE OF POWER GAME HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH. THE DCM REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT IT HAD.

2. TEJA THEN SAID THAT THE GOI HAD RECEIVED A REPORT, WHICH NATURALLY DISTURBED THEM, THAT THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO DECLARE ITSELF AN ISLAMIC REPUBLIC: HE ASKED IF THE EMBASSY HAD ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THIS AND INQUIRED ABOUT OUR VIEW CONCERNING THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE COUNTRY GENERALLY. THE DCM REPLIED THAT THE EMBASSY HAD NO RPT NO INFORMATION ABOUT ANY BANGALEE INTENTION TO DECLARE AN ISLAMIC REPUBLIC. HE THEN DESCRIBED THE SITUATION IN BANGLADESH AS ONE IN WHICH THERE HAD BEEN NUMEROUS MUTINIES; EACH SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL BUT THE SITUATION REMAINED AN UNCERTAIN ONE. TEJA COMMENTED THAT THE INDIAN ASSESSMENT WAS THAT THE SITUATION WAS STILL VERY UNCERTAIN. THE GOI HAD FOUND SOMEWHAT DISQUIETING THE STORIES WHICH HAD APPEARED IN THE US PRESS IMPLICATING INDIA FOR SUCH THINGS AS ARMED INTERVENTION IN BANGLADESH, HAVING A HAND IN THE NOV. 3 COUP, AND BACKING THE JSD. HE SAID THAT THESE REPORTS WERE GROUNDLESS AND MISCHIEVOUS AND RESTATED THE GOI POSITION THAT WHATEVER HAPPENS IN BANGLADESH IS AN INTERNAL MATTER. THE GOI IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAPPENS THERE AND WISHES THE BANGALIS WELL. IF, HOWEVER, SOMETHING HAPPENED TO THE HINDU MINORITY THERE WOULD BE A PROBLEM. WHEN QUERIED ABOUT POSSIBLE REFUGEES, TEJA SAID THAT WHILE HE DID NOT FOLLOW THIS MATTER CLOSELY HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY PERSONS WHO WERE FLEEING FOR REASONS OF INSECURITY.

3. TEJA THEN LAUNCHED INTO A COMPLAINT ABOUT THE REPORTING ON INDIAN INTERVENTION IN THE WASHINGTON POST, WHICH IS BEING REPORTED SEPARATELY.

4. WHILE TEJA CLEARLY WAS LOOKING FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE ATTITUDE TOWARD MINORITIES AND INDIA OF THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT, WE BELIEVE HIS PRIMARY PURPOSE WAS TO DISCUSS THE WASHINGTON POST ARTICLES. WE REPORT THIS EXCHANGE, HOWEVER, AS AN INDICATION THAT INDIA CONTINUES TO BE ACTIVELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ISLAMIC NATURE OF THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT AND THE PROTECTION OF HINDUS WHILE IT ADHERES TO ITS STATED POSITION OF NON-INTERFERENCE AND DENIES THAT INDIAN INTERVENTION HAS TAKEN
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SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 277395

PLACE.

5. SUGGEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO DACCA.
SAXBE
UNCQUOTE KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROTECTIVE SECURITY, FOREIGN RELATIONS, PRESS COMMENTS, CAT-B, HINDUS, MINORITIES, POLITICAL SITUATION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE277395
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:LMATTESON
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: N750005-0777
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751119/aaaaaqcn.tel
Line Count: 112
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 75 NEW DELHI 14347
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 AUG 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <25 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDIAN QUERY ABOUT SECRETARY'S LETTER TO CHAVAN ON BANGLADESH
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, IN, BG, US, (TEJA)
To: DACCA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006